



ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

UTILITY KNIFE

A utility knife (10) includes a hollow handle (12) for retractably housing a blade (14) mounted on a blade carrier (48). The blade carrier (48) is pivotally coupled to an actuator (50). A user can extend or retract the blade (14) through a front slot (22) by depressing an actuating button (30) and sliding the actuator (50) along an actuator glideway (82) and blade carrier (48) along a carrier glideway (61) to a desired position. Once in the desired position a resilient member (74) on the actuator (50) urges protrusions (76) on the actuator (50) into engagement with detents (80) provided within the handle (12). The blade carrier glideway (61) is provided in a non-parallel orientation with respect to the actuator glideway (82) to obtain a beneficial force transmission to the actuator that tends to maintain engagement between the actuator (50) and the detents (80). A blade guard (36) at least partially surrounds the front slot (22) to resist upward forces on the blade (14) during cutting, while a carrier guard (60) contacts a portion of the cutting edge of the blade (14) within the handle (12) to protect the carrier (48) from damage by the blade (14). The blade carrier (48) and the actuator (50) include abutment surfaces (148), (150) for effectively transmitting axial compression forces on the blade from the carrier (48) to the actuator (50) without exerting excessive force on the joint between the carrier (48) and the actuator (50). The actuator (50) is substantially rigid and is urged into engagement with the detents (80) by a resilient member (74), thereby avoiding deflection of the actuator (50) as a result of axial compression forces exerted on the blade (14).